

Testimony of David Welsh on **Senate Bill 844 “An Act Implementing the Budget Recommendations of the Governor Concerning Higher Education”**

Thursday, February 28, 2013 at 1:00 p.m. in Room 1E of the LOB in Hartford, CT

Good afternoon Co-Chairs of the Higher Education and Employment Advancement Committee, State Senator Bye, State Representative Willis, and all the members of the Committee. My name is David Welsh, and I am the Director of Student Financial Assistance at Tunxis Community College in Farmington. I would like to speak to the Governor’s Scholarship, one of the Governor’s budget recommendations for the next academic year.

My colleague Margaret Malaspina has given you a picture of the students at her college who would be left out of the Governor’s Scholarship as it is now proposed. The students at Tunxis who would become ineligible as part-time students are much like those at Capital. Encouraging our students to persist in their studies and complete degrees is a goal we all share, but our students who can’t attend full-time have the same aspirations as full-time students, and I don’t believe we should deny them a reasonable chance at this assistance.

I suggest these modifications to the Governor’s Scholarship:

- Allow students enrolled on at least a half-time basis to receive the Governor’s Scholarship. For many community college students, family and work commitments make part-time study the more responsible choice.
- Pro-rate the Governor’s Scholarship for these students as the federal Pell grant program does.
- Apply a more demanding standard of academic eligibility, as shown in grade point average, than is used in student aid generally.
- Limit Governor’s Scholarship eligibility to a reasonable number of semesters, consistent with the student’s enrollment status, and to one associate’s degree.
- Incorporate these students into the Governor’s Scholarship institutional fund allocation formula.

Margaret explained that student employment promotes student success and helps our colleges provide essential services to all students. I suggest that colleges be allowed to use a limited amount of Governor’s Scholarship funding for part-time jobs based on financial need, as follows:

- Colleges should be able to use Governor’s Scholarship funds for employment, up to the percentage of CAPCS funds they used for employment in 2011-12, with a maximum of 11.3% (the average percentage used by the community colleges in 2011-12).
- Students could be employed with Governor’s Scholarship funds only if their costs for tuition, fees, and books are met by other financial assistance.
- Apply the same academic eligibility standard to Governor’s Scholarship student workers as to grant recipients.
- Incorporate these students into the Governor’s Scholarship institutional fund allocation formula.

Thank you for the opportunity to present these suggestions. I believe that they would further the goals of persistence and completion while helping our community colleges maintain the commitment of access to opportunity for the non-traditional students we were created to serve.